

SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

Paper 3248/01
Composition and
Translation

Key messages

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- write a composition covering each bullet point
- stay within the prescribed word limits for each task
- For translation, do not miss out words and phrases

General comments

As usual, the overall performance of the candidates was good, with the majority of them producing very good work. There were some for whom the technical demands of the translation were too high, but most of them coped well with the requirements of the different questions, the only limitations being that of:

- (a) the candidates' language proficiency, and
- (b) their ability to understand and respond appropriately and concisely to the questions.

The paper consisted of three questions. The total for the paper is 55 marks

Comments on specific questions

PART ONE: DIRECTED COMPOSITION

Question 1 required candidates to write a short essay of about 150 words on the topic "The importance of hobbies" ("*Mushağyl ki ahmiyat*")

6 marks were for content and 9 for language, giving a total mark of 15 marks for the question.

Three main bullet points were given in the stimulus, namely:

- *mushağyl ki zarurat*
The need for hobbies
- *mushağyl na apnane ke nuqsanat*
The disadvantages of not having a hobby
- *Ajkal kawn se mushağyl ziada maqbul haiñ*
What hobbies are most popular nowadays

2 marks were awarded for each bullet point, depending on whether they had given two facts and how much detail was given. Most candidates scored well on the first two points this year, but quite a few did not score on the third bullet point.

The first point this year was one that most candidates could easily score 2 marks. The most frequently mentioned ideas were:

- to do something other than work or study;
- to keep the brain active;
- to keep busy;
- to make friends;
- to learn a useful skill;

The second bullet point was equally well addressed. Commonly mentioned ideas included:

- leads to depression;
- makes you lazy;
- Satan makes his home in an idle mind;
- can lead to bad habits

Most candidates managed to score 2 marks for this bullet point.

The third point was usually well attempted because it was very straightforward. The problem for some candidates was that they simply wrote a list of sports. After some consideration, the examining team decided that sports constituted one hobby and to get two marks candidates should mention a different kind of activity. Many of course did just that. Some mentioned include:

- reading books;
- watching films;
- sewing;
- playing computer games;

Unfortunately, as is the case every session, the third point was frequently missed out or was not marked because the candidate had overrun the prescribed word limit. This meant that candidates lost marks for content because whatever points they had made after the word limit could not be taken into consideration.

It is very important to follow the rubrics for each question if high marks are to be achieved.

Nine marks were available to reward the candidates' linguistic performance. Most candidates scored between 7–9 marks on this task. Very few candidates were unable to score more than 5 for language.

PART TWO: DIALOGUE. LETTER, REPORT OR SPEECH

This session provided candidates with a choice of either:

(a) DIALOGUE

“Ap apni agli jama’at meñ apni marzi ke mazamin chunna cahte haiñ magar ap ke valyden khush nahiñ haiñ- ap unhaiñ razamand karne ki koshys kar rahe haiñ - pesh ane wala mwkalama likhye”

You want to have your choice of subjects for the next class but your parents are unhappy. You try to persuade them. Write the ensuing dialogue.

Or

(b) REPORT

“Apne askul ki laibrari ki sahulatoñ par tabsera karte hue ek report lykheñ awr unheñ bather banane ke liye tajawiz pesh kareñ”

Having reviewed the facilities on your school library, write a report on them and include suggestions for their improvement.

The dialogue writing task is a relatively recent innovation in this exam and it has proved a very popular choice for many candidates, who usually do this task very well. In this series this task was, by and large, very satisfactorily attempted. Recent examining experience has shown that candidates enjoy writing the dialogue task, and many inject a welcome sense of drama and humour into their work. It was no surprise to find that many of them scored very well on this task.

The one real weakness was the key point of the task – trying to persuade the parents to let them get their choice. The examining team felt that many parents gave in too easily without being persuaded. That being said, most candidates scored 4 or 5 marks out of 5 for content, while most scored between 9–13 out of 15 for language.

The report-writing task was attempted by approximately a quarter of the candidates, but it was, on the whole, well done. Most reports seemed very candid in their criticisms, citing lack of books, cramped spaces, uncomfortable chairs, lack of A/C, etc. The weakness for some candidates was the need to make suggestions, some making only one although most did write at least two.

For either task, candidates were instructed to write about two hundred words, with an exhortation to keep to the recommended length. Once again, the most unnecessary deduction of marks occurred when candidates wrote far in excess of the requisite prescribed word limit. These tasks can be completed satisfactorily within the limit so Centres should ensure that their candidates attempt to stay within the set limit.

PART THREE: TRANSLATION

This question required candidates to translate a given passage into Urdu. The topic of the passage was “Should boys learn to cook?”

Candidates are not penalised for grammatical or spelling errors as long as these did not interfere with communicating the meaning. This means that for the vast majority of candidates translating the gist of the passage is not a difficult task and that they score between 15 to 20 out of 20 marks, despite at time writing inaccurate Urdu.

One of the more interesting points this year was that in the very first sentence (“Should boys learn to cook?”) a surprisingly high number of candidates translated this as “*kya laṛkoñ ko khana pakana ana chahiye?*” (“Should boys know how to cook?”). The correct Urdu is, however, “*kya laṛkoñ ko khana pakan sikhna chahiye?*” The examining team decided that there is sufficient difference in meaning between the two to require “*sikhna*”.

Another word in the first sentence that caused some problems was “twenty-first”. A remarkably high number of candidates got this wrong, choosing to write “*bisviñ*” or even “*unisviñ*” (19th or 20th).

Many weaker candidates tend to miss out certain phrases or sentences completely. An example of this occurred in the first line of the passage, namely “not only ---- but also”, for which the use of “*na syrf ---- balky*” or “*hi*” are straightforward Urdu words. It is always better to have an educated guess that is appropriate to the context of the sentence or the passage than to leave bits out.

Once again there were issues with certain English words in the passage. Some need not be translated because there are no everyday Urdu equivalents, but this session the misuse of English words was reduced, in part because the examiner had written a passage which did not involve many such words. By and large, most candidates managed to convey the gist of the passage as a whole, and certainly this year the passage was on the whole better attempted than in recent sessions.

In spite of errors of spelling or grammar, the great majority of candidates displayed the communication skills in Urdu required to meet the marking criteria for the higher grades.

SECOND LANGUAGE URDU

Paper 3248/02
Language Usage,
Summary and
Comprehension

Key messages:

In order to do well in this examination, candidates should:

- have good control of the tense system;
- a wide range of vocabulary;
- be able to write summaries that are concise and stick to the word limit;
- use their own words when answering comprehension questions

General Comments

The overall performance of candidates was good. There were a few candidates whose limited linguistic proficiency meant they were unable to understand the question or give an appropriate response. The majority of candidates managed to score a satisfactory amount of marks, and the more proficient succeeded in getting full marks.

Candidates are expected to use their own words while answering questions to demonstrate their understanding and so should not lift sentences directly from the passage or use them as their answer. It is important that candidates' work is legible and answers are clearly indicated on the question paper. It is also important that candidates write their answers in the correct spaces and is advisable to always attempt an answer rather than leaving a blank space.

Comments on Specific Questions

Part 1: Language Usage

Vocabulary

Questions 1–5 required candidates to compose five sentences using the five given idioms in order to demonstrate their meanings. Very few candidates answered **Question 2** (ساز باز کرتا) correctly and a large number of candidates did not give any response for this idiom. The rest of the idioms were mostly well understood. While attempting this task, it must be remembered that the sentence has to show that the meaning has been correctly understood, otherwise marks cannot be awarded. Sometimes candidates have to clarify or support the answer with a reason in order to convey the exact meaning. For instance, the sentence **میں گلدان توڑ کر امی کی ڈانٹ سے بال بال بچ گیا** is not acceptable until a suitable reason is given to demonstrate the exact meaning, like **مہمانوں کی موجودگی کی وجہ سے میں گلدان توڑ کر امی کی ڈانٹ سے بال بال بچ گیا**. Similarly, the literal meaning of an idiom is also not accepted.

Sentence Transformation

Questions 6–10 required the candidates to write the antonyms of the underlined words. Both underlined words had to be correctly altered to gain one mark. The majority of candidates scored marks in this part; however, some candidates struggled with the opposites of **خزاں** and **بے احتیاطی** due to their limited linguistic proficiency. While changing the form of the underlined words as required, the candidates have to be careful to choose a word that fits in properly without making any changes to the sentence structure.

Cloze Passage

Questions 11–15

The candidates were required to choose suitable words from the given list to fill in the blanks. Most candidates performed well in this task. Candidates with lower language proficiency, however, found **questions 11 and 15** a bit challenging.

Part 2: Summary

Question 16

There was plenty of opportunity for the candidates to score maximum marks in this part. The points given for discussion were specific and clear and demanded exact information. However, only a few candidates managed to get full marks, with a large majority writing unnecessary details from the introduction. Candidates should make sure that they read the passage very carefully and then extract the information needed according to each bullet point (two pieces of information for each stimulus). Candidates should be careful not to give unrequired information or too much detail for any point as this will usually result in the word limit (100 words) being breached. Candidates will lose marks if they fail to address all points required within this limit.

Responses must be accurate. For instance, responses like خاندانی نظام ختم ہو رہا ہے or کہانیوں کا سلسلہ اختتام پذیر ہے were inaccurate. Candidates should have written instead... مشترکہ خاندانی نظام & کہانی سننے سنانے کا سلسلہ in order to avoid losing marks.

Part 3: Comprehension

Passage A

Generally this part was well attempted, and many candidates achieved full marks for their responses. It is important to remember that the number of marks allocated for each question corresponds to the number of pieces of information required. The questions where some candidates faced difficulty are as follows:

Question 19

The question was worth 3 marks and asked about the different ways in which gold is used for the purpose of ornamentation. Some candidates did not understand the word آرائش properly and explained that gold is mixed with other metals to make jewellery and thus, lost marks.

Question 22

This question required two responses. The candidates who generalised the information as “used in food or beverages” and “used in medicine” lost marks, as they failed to give specific answers which were required (جوڑوں کے علاج میں استعمال and سونے کا ورق / پتہ).

Question 23

The question was worth 2 marks and required two responses i.e.

- People did not invest in new businesses
- To secure their capital they purchased gold

A good number of candidates could not be awarded full marks since they did not provide all of the information asked for in the question.

Passage B

This passage was understood and the questions well answered by the majority of candidates. **Question 25**, which was worth 4 marks, was attempted particularly well and a large majority of candidates scored full marks.

A significant number of candidates were not awarded full marks for their responses to question 27 as they failed to understand the question and gave irrelevant details.